

Four Things Every Christian Should Have

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Alright, let's grab our Bibles and let's go to Colossians this time, Colossians 1. Turn there with me, if you will, and we're gonna talk about the will of God. Now you're gonna say, "Well, pastor, we just looked at the will of God for several sessions." Yes, but in that we were talking a little bit more about our individual lives and maybe what that means but in the conclusion of it all, basically from the Scriptures you come to the perspective that if you love God and you're walking in his Spirit and you're growing to treasure God and obviously you're not disobeying his word knowingly, then do what you want. Do what you want to do. And we see the apostles on numerous occasions as they plan their apostolic ministry, they'll come to a situation and they'll say something like, "We did what seemed best to us." They knew they were in the will of God, they knew they were called to plant churches and spread the gospel and they didn't know exactly what that meant all the time, so I would think generally Christians need to be done with there's this mystical 1,000 outlined, uh, detailed plan of God for my life. Well, there is but only God knows that. Uh, God's providence stands behind everything that happens or doesn't happen but on our side we just seek the Lord, we love him more, we treasure him more, we walk in his Spirit, we don't violate Scripture, and we do what we want to do. I can't tell you God's will about, well, should you buy this business or this piece of land, or should you start this kind of work, or study this kind of discipline. I don't know that. What do you want to do? Uh, and then ask God to guide you and give you those, uh, red lights and green lights and yellow lights and turn signals. But now here in this text, the will of God is a little different. It's more the will of God for Christians and how we approach our faith in Christ, or you might just say how we approach our Christianity.

Let me read the text. Colossians 1:9-14.

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will [there it is] in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. 13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred

us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Now this whole section builds on that phrase "the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" in verse 9. Now when we're talking about God's will here, he's talking about God's will concerning salvation, sanctification, and that everything is for the glory of God. That's God's will, that you understand that God's way of salvation, that you understand God's will and God's means of sanctification, and that you understand it's all about God and all about his glory. Uh, I worded it this way in my notes just to, to give to you. What Christ did for you wrought salvation, what Christ does in you brings sanctification, and all is centered in God's glorification. That's God's will. God's will is that you grasp what Christ did for you has wrought your salvation, that is, your justification and your standing before God; and that what Christ does in you brings about your sanctification, that is, your obedient faithful walk in service and honor of God in this life; and that all is centered in that God might get the credit, the honor and the glory for saving you, sanctifying you and getting you home one day to heaven.

Alright, now that's what I want you to center on as far as what the will of God is. Now there's a reason for this and that is because the churches in this day were exactly like the churches in our day in this perspective, they was so much false doctrine out there. There were so many people who were trying to take advantage of this exciting new movement called Christianity and what they would do, they would take their old man religion, or their old worldly philosophies and they would try to weave Jesus into it. So basically they kept their earthly wisdom and their man-centered view of life, in other words, doing things their own way, but they kind of attached Jesus onto it.

Now there were two main extremes and there were thousands of points in between. Uh, I say two main extremes, we might say two main channels of false teaching. One was the Judaizers or the legalists, the Jewish legalist who would say, "Now you've gotta keep the law of Moses and you've gotta do these things according to the law, the ceremonial law, the moral law etc. etc., but just tag Jesus onto it." And you and I know that there are people in our day that basically do that. They've come up with a new list of do's and don'ts and then they tag Jesus onto it, like this makes it okay. So there was the Jewish legalist on the one end that were perverting the truth, perverting God's will concerning salvation and sanctification, and then there were the Gnostic teachers. Remember, the Gnostics were self-appointed elitists. They were the ones that would say, "If you want to know what God, who God is and you want to know salvation, we have the real knowledge." And that's what the word "gnosis" or "Gnostic" means, knowledge. "We have knowledge others don't have and you have to sit at our feet and understand our special insight if you really want to know who Jesus is and how to be saved." Well, both of those are, are contrary to God's will, and like I said, that's a simplistic definition because there are various, uh, uh, viewpoints under those headings, but nevertheless, that's the basic thing that was coming against the church.

Now nothing has changed in 2,000 years. We continually get varying viewpoints and varying approaches that come across the church today that says, "Well, if you really want

to be like Jesus," and, and this whole thing that we've been hearing in the last few years about, "Well, now this is a gospel issue or this is a gospel issue." Here's what I want to tell you: the gospel is the gospel. You don't add issues to the gospel. Can I get an amen there? You don't add your present, uh, concern or your, your present, uh, uh, uh, social need and say, "Now we've gotta jump on that because that's a gospel issue." Brothers and sisters, the gospel's the gospel, it always has been the gospel. Now people who've been changed by the gospel may have a heart for certain things but you can't tell me that every Christian has had the exact same heart about those, about all the sins and evils and injustices that, that are in a, a Satan-controlled sin-filled world. You can't ever get to the end of that. So I'm not gonna dictate to you and you should not dictate to me and Christians should not dictate to one another, "You've gotta be about this, you've gotta be in this movement or that movement or you're not a real Christian really. You're not because these are gospel issues." Well, what I'm saying is, I've, I've been at this four decades now and there's always a new emphasis of tagging something on, and sometimes it's not so much a heretic false teaching but sometimes it becomes sort of foundational and centered in people's doctrine in their lives and then it really does become a false teaching. Here's what I'm saying to you: there will always be the temptations to move, move away from God's will concerning this is what salvation is, this is what sanctification is, and it's all for the glory of God. Alright, so keep that in your mind as we go through this.

So now concerning this, I've just simply used the old title that I had years and years ago but the body of it has changed somewhat and that is "Four Things Every Christian Should Have." Four things every Christian should have. Are you ready?

1. A spiritual grasp of God's will. A spiritual grasp of God's will. Now the, a very important word there is "spiritual." Now listen, only the Holy Spirit can take the word of God and guide you to the truth. Man cannot by his own intellect study this Bible and find the truth. Are you hearing me? I don't care if you've got a PhD in Greek and a PhD in, in, in Hebrew and Aramaic, the Old Testament original languages, I don't care if you have a PhD in biblical theology and systematic theology and soteriology and eschatology and ecclesiology or whatever else you may have one in, and I don't care how much you've studied, you cannot know the truth, therefore know God's will, unless the Spirit of God reveals it to you. And I don't know why God chose it but he's chosen the foolishness of preaching to be one of the primary ways the Spirit shows you God's will from his word. That's why you'd better make sure you're sitting under someone who's doing their best to giving you thorough biblical preaching.

Now a spiritual grasp of God's will. Look at verse 9 again. Uh, let me get my glasses because I am going blind, alright? "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it," that's we've heard of the faith that the new, uh, growing church in Colossae has, "we have not ceased to pray for you and we're asking God," Paul says, "that you be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Let me say this right off the bat. Those three words "knowledge, wisdom, understanding," you can consult scholar after scholar and it's very hard to find out just exactly what does the word, uh, "wisdom" mean, and just exactly what does the word "understanding" mean in contrast to

the word "knowledge." Well, I think we can get a general idea and that is knowledge means a collection of facts in your head but the true facts in your head, the intellectual grasp, if you will. It never stops there, by the way, because it's very true, you can, you can have a person who thoroughly knows orthodox Bible doctrine, they've got it in their brain, they've got a brilliant mind and they can articulate it, they can write about it, they've studied it, but it didn't get past the brain. Now understanding and wisdom has more the aspect of knowing how to, or let me put it this way, knowing how it works. It's one thing to describe something, it's another thing to know, "Well, this is what it looks like in reality. This is how it works out."

So in this arena that the Colossae church was in of false doctrine, particularly false doctrine concerning who Christ is and how he saves us, Paul says, "I've been praying that you have a full and true knowledge of God's will." Now again, uh, you just casually may look at that and say, "Oh, God's will for my life." No, no, no, God's will concerning certainly your life but salvation and sanctification, how men truly come to know God and truly please and live for God because there are a lot of lies being taught, as I've said, about that. Um, again, the, the, the word "knowledge" has more the idea of a mental, uh, uh, component where wisdom and understanding have more how does this apply and work out in life.

Now just some sub points there. Uh, one scholar said that knowledge is desirable only when seasoned by understanding. What did the Apostle Paul write to the Corinthians and say? He said, "Knowledge puffeth up. Knowledge can make you arrogant. Knowledge can make you proud." But when you really understand God's true knowledge about who Christ is and how he saves us, it can't puff you up. When you truly understand the truth about your sin, the Savior's death and sacrifice for you, his everlasting love for you, his cleansing atoning work for you etc. etc., when you have more than just the knowledge but you're beginning to grasp and understand that and, by the way, we never stop learning, it just gets richer and richer and more wonderful and more wonderful and more glorious and more glorious, but when you're on that, in, in that process as a Christian, it crushes the pride factor. It brings what I call that sweet gospel humility that is essential for a church to be a true church and a healthy church.

So instead of viewing Christ as this, uh, uh, mystical spirit thing and that would be the Gnostic teaching, that the, the true Jesus came on Jesus at his baptism but the true Jesus left Jesus at his, at his crucifixion. It's a weird thing that they, they came up with and they wanted you to be impressed with their keen insight. Well, Paul says, "Don't be impressed with them. That's not true knowledge. That's false knowledge." You need to know that Christ is literally God in human flesh, Christ literally became a man, uh, Christ wasn't this spirit animation that came on this person called Christ and then popped back off of him again like the Gnostics would teach, that this Christ was God of very God, God in human flesh. John 1:17, he was the Word that became flesh. He's the true Savior sent from God and he became man.

Now that's the will of God. It's the will of God that you hold onto those truths and you believe those truths. Now in our arena, I'm not aware of anybody attacking the person of

Christ but it will happen and it does happen and it will happen again, especially in the, uh, uh, higher educational realms of our world. And also not only who Christ is but what he has done, that is, his work. He said, Paul said, "I, I'm praying that you really have a true and accurate understanding so that you'll not be pulled away by these legalistic Judaizers who want to tell you, 'Yes, embrace Jesus but also you must sit at our feet and let us teach you all these minutiae of rules and rituals and guidelines.'" Here's something, brothers and sisters, that has, is a, is a foundational element of all false teaching. Are you listening to me? Control. They want to give you the kind of doctrines that require you to sit under them so they can tell you what you must do if you're gonna make it to heaven or if you're gonna be pleasing to God. I want right the opposite, I want you to so know Jesus that you don't need me. I mean that. I want you to so grasp the fullness, the completeness, the perfection, the redemption, the glory of your salvation in Christ – listen – and in Christ alone so that Jeff Noblit is absolutely expendable. But, I like those conjunctive words, but you appreciate and thank God for the vessel he does use to bring you the all-sufficient Christ. Amen on that? Are you with me, church, on the balance of that? Not just me, Brother Matt and Brother David, Brother Steve, Brother everybody we got now. Got so many I don't know who they are, alright? My point is Jesus, Jesus, Jesus alone is our salvation.

So he provided our salvation, he paid for the penalty of our sin on the cross, in our day-to-day lives now he's working through us to help us overcome the power of sin, and then one day in heaven by his own doing he will strip away the old man, the old polluted corrupted flesh and he will give us a new body and we will be glorified and then forever be saved from the presence of sin. Paul says, "I want you to have that true knowledge of Jesus Christ." That's God's will.

Now when we say that, you might think, "Well, good, I'm done with that. I, I agree with all of that." No, you're not. There is so much to all of this. There's point after point after dynamic after dynamic after principle after principle of all that Christ is about and you need to keep hearing the gospel because when you hear the gospel again, another aspect comes out to you – now listen to me – and it makes you just love Christ even more. It makes you thankful to Christ even more. It makes you glory in what he's done for you even more. And that's foundational in our sanctification.

And then, of course, not only who is Christ and what he's done but that we are absolutely complete in him. We are in Christ. As Paul begins the letter to the Colossians church, or I should say maybe the Colossae church, he says in verse 2, look at it there in chapter 1, "To the saints," that means holy ones, "and faithful brethren," now here's the, here's the aspect, "in Christ." You're not saints because of you, you're not saints based on your merit or achievement, you're saints because you are those who are in Christ. It all centers in him. He makes us complete. He, now listen, he is my righteousness before God. He, he stands before God and I stand before God in him and God sees his righteousness and accounts me therefore righteous because I'm in him. Paul says, "I want you to grasp, I want you to grasp what is the spiritual truth of God's will and it's all centered in Jesus Christ. Your salvation, your sanctification, it's all for God's glorification."

Now II. Four things every Christian should know. First of all, we should have a spiritual grasp of God's will. Secondly, we need a spiritual walk in God's will. A spiritual walk in God's will. Again, spiritual is a key word. It's the word he uses to begin with but he's gonna bring it out more as we go through the text, and that is that the Holy Spirit of God must enable you to esteem the word of God and glean from the word of God the things you need so you might know how to live your daily life in God's will in truth and in righteousness and in holiness.

Look at verse 10, "so that you will walk." In other words, he says, "I want you to understand God's true will about Christ and salvation," verse 9, to the end that, verse 10, you live a certain way, "so that you may walk in a manner," verse 10, "worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." A proper understanding leads to active application. Here's the point, Paul says, "When you really grasp God's will through Christ Jesus in saving you and it's all about Him, then something happens inside of you where you want to live for Him." You, you're not in Grace Life Church, we're a Baptist church, you're not in this Baptist church because you're trying to earn your way to heaven, you're in a Baptist church because God's done something in you and you want to be with the communion of the saints to live for God and serve God and help one another and encourage one another and hold one another accountable. It's just natural for you now. If you're not in Christ and you haven't grasped God's will in Christ Jesus and all that he's done to save you, then you probably won't like this church. But if you do know those things, you will enjoy a true church. You'll be drawn to it.

One thing we need to remind ourselves is that we are to know God's will that we might obey God's will, not study God's will. I, I really think that's a failure among even good solid theologians and teachers and book writers today is there's far too much studying stuff and far too little obeying stuff. And he says right here, "I, I want you to know it that you might live it, that you might put it into practice." The emphasis on walking out what we know sets Christianity apart from all other religions. We walk in Christ. We walk loving him and grateful to him for the full forgiveness and the full redemption he's provided for us.

1 Timothy, um, 3, Paul writes that the Lord says, "You shall be holy as I am holy." We want to, uh, holiness has got a, uh, our former pastor used to say that, uh, there was a group called a holiness group and, you know, the ladies all dressed in a certain way and they couldn't cut their hair and they couldn't wear make-up, and I don't know why but they seemed to wear bobbish, those, what do you call those socks? Little white socks and tennis shoes and denim dresses, long denim dresses. Now I'm for the modesty and we could learn something there, by the way, but he used to say that's not holiness, that's pitifulness. His point was holiness is not putting on an outer thing, it's if you're holy you want to be modest and appropriately, uh, dressed but the point is holiness comes from the heart and it's that heart condition that we're not of this world, we don't belong to this world, this world is not, does not give us our values, our principles to live by. We are set apart, that's what holy is. We're set apart unto God as his people. There's a difference in the way we raise our children, or there should be. There's a difference in the way we view

our spouses, or there should be. There's a difference in the way we view our fellow man and particularly the way we view one another in the church because we are people who are striving to be holy, set apart for God, used for his purposes. We want to know him and we want to be like him.

He uses the phrase in, uh, verse 10 "to please Him in all respects." In other words, I think what Paul is saying in the context, "I don't want you to drift off into following the Jewish legalist." And by the way, if you lived in this culture in this day, that was a powerful temptation because they, they so permeated the culture when it comes to monotheism, uh, the Greeks had their, uh, polytheist, polytheism and all their false gods and idols, but the Jews did have the truth. They misunderstood it and misused it but they had the truth and so that would've been a powerful temptation and I think what Paul is saying, "The moment you add Jewish law or any legalism to Christ, then you are not pleasing Him in all respects. Follow God's will," he's saying, "which is to hold only to Christ. Christ and Christ alone."

Then he says "bearing fruit in every good work" in verse 10. Now what this means is you're not just to be involved in good works. A man of the flesh can do that. The natural man can involve themselves in good works. There's, there's a lot of people in this world who have worked at disciplining the old man, the old man and putting on, uh, outer works of, of what appears to be goodness and righteousness and sanctification and separation from bad habits and sins etc. etc., and like I said this morning in my sermon, that'll make you a better neighbor, it'll make you better member of the community but it doesn't make you right before God. In other words, it's not just good works but it's bearing fruit, he says in verse 10, of good works.

Look at it there, "so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work." It means the fruit of the Spirit, the, the fruit that only the Spirit of God can produce, it flavors, it is the tone, it is the spirit of the good works you perform. Have you ever been around a real legalist? Their spirit is not good. They may dot the i's and cross the t's on outward behavior but their tone is harsh usually, it's, it's legalistic, it's judgmental, it's overbearing, it's unkind, it's demeaning. That's not the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. So, yes, we don't do the don'ts and we are to do the do's as far as moral and upstanding conduct, but we do them from a heart that loves God and that means we're doing them out of the capacity that only the Holy Spirit can give you. The lost man can put on some stuff outwardly but it can't come from his heart because his heart has never been changed.

Then he has that interesting phrase at the end of verse 10, "and increasing in the knowledge of God." We say, "Paul, you already talked about knowing the knowledge of His will," in verse 9, "now," in verse 10, "you're saying increasing in the knowledge of God." Well, I think what he's saying is a proper understanding of the knowledge of God concerning Christ and salvation leads to proper convert, conduct rather, and conversely – now listen to me now – obedience and living right because you love God leads to more knowledge. Did you hear that? God gives you more understanding of his truth as you live

out the truth he's already given you. There's a lot of Christians that haven't gone very far because they've put learning over obedience. They keep collecting facts in their head but they don't have true knowledge. They certainly don't have knowledge with wisdom and understanding. God gives you more knowledge, more wisdom and more understanding as you obey what you've already been taught and what you've already been shown.

Uh, let's, let's go to John 7 right quick. Would you turn back there with me? John 7 and, uh, look at verse 16. He's being, uh, challenged, uh, grumbled against, undermined, spoken against by the Pharisees of his day, the Jewish legalists of his day, and then he says something interesting in John 7:16 back to this, "So Jesus answered them and said, 'My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.'" In other words, "You got a problem with Me, you've got a problem with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that you claim you love. I'm not the problem here. The God I'm obeying, who is My heavenly Father, He's your problem." By the way, child of God, if, if you're striving to walk in the Spirit and honor God's truth in the community, there will be times when people will come against you and you've gotta remind yourself it's not you that's the problem, it's the God in you they don't like, it's the God in you they're attacking. And that's basically what Jesus is saying here, "My teaching is not My teaching. You have a problem with My Father."

Then he says, verse 17 of John 7, "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." In other words, "If you, if your heart has been changed so that from the heart you're not about doing legalistic work so that you might get to heaven, you're not, you're not about jumping through religious hoops and observing certain rituals or obeying do's and not doing the don'ts so that you might somehow gain for yourself, that, if that's in your heart, you're not getting anywhere. But if your heart's been changed where you know God saved you wholly and only through his promised Savior, then you would know My teaching is from God." In other words, you would have a special understanding of more knowledge. You want to know more? Obey more. You want to learn more? Live out what you know. And I don't think God's talking about perfection here, I think he means that you, you repent of where he shows you that you're on the wrong track, wrong thinking, wrong motives, wrong attitudes, wrong dispositions, your thinking's wrong and then sometimes your behavior's wrong and you begin to be a repentor and you attack those things saying, "O God, help me to be what I ought to be!" And when that's your attitude, God says, boom, "I'm gonna open up the floodgates of knowledge. I'm gonna teach you more because I like your attitude." You ever, have you ever had a parent do that to you? As a parent have you ever done that to your child? They're not perfect and they struggle but they come to you with a sweet and humble spirit and saying, "Mommy, I want to do what's right." You know what you do? You pour more on them. You pour more love. You pour more attention. You pour more affirmation. And that's what God is saying, "You've got a heart to honor Me and love Me from your heart, then I'm gonna give you more and more knowledge."

The Bible says the things of the Spirit are foolishness to the natural man. Here's what that means. Brothers and sisters, are you listening? When you and I live in God's will, according to God's word illumined and made clear to us by God's Spirit, the world will

not get us. The world will not comprehend what we're about. The world will not grasp why we do what we do. So quit trying to help them get it. They're just not gonna get it. What you need to pray for is, "Lord, I'm gonna speak the truth and may Your Spirit open their eyes to the truth." That's why I'm using "spiritual" in all these points because the Spirit of God is essential.

Lightfoot, the esteemed Greek scholar, in his commentary said, "The end of knowledge is conduct." A person may say he knows God, well, really God's saying, "If you say you know Me, you mean you obey Me. If you're not striving to obey Me, you don't know Me." I'd rather have a 12 year old boy that loves Jesus and hasn't learned much of the Bible than a guy with three doctorates teaching Sunday school in my church who doesn't know God and doesn't love him from his heart. It's time the church quit being enthralled with worldly wisdom and worldly learning but with godly holiness and obedience.

Alright, I've gotta hurry. III. The fourth thing every Christian should have is a spiritual perseverance in God's will. A spiritual perseverance in God's will. Look at verse 11. Oh, we've got to get back to our text, don't we? Colossians 1:11. Now he says in verse 11 building on what he's already taught, "strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might." Well, what is that? That's the Spirit in you. His glorious might in you is the Spirit of God in you. What? "For the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously." His point is in this Satan-controlled sin-filled world, if you're striving to live for God and love God from your heart and embrace the doctrine of salvation is by Christ alone, through faith alone, for the glory of God alone, then you're gonna run into trials and difficulties and oppositions and people demeaning you, people scoffing at you, maybe losing a job. I don't know. It could be tough. For these people in this day it certainly meant those things, if not worse. But he says, "But what I'm praying is that this mighty power that's in you, this Spirit that's in you will enable you to stay steadfast and even have joy in these trials." That's God's will for you, friend, that you will have a spiritual perseverance, that kind of steadfastness in not turning back, not retreating that only the Spirit of God can enable a person to have. That's God's will. That's God's will, a spiritual perseverance.

Now just in the way of an insight here, I think the key is to rest in his strength. Is that not what he's bringing out? He doesn't just beat on you here and say, "Persevere, persevere, persevere." Here's what he says, "I'm praying you will be strengthened with all power," not your power, that's God's, "according to His glorious might." Wow. He's saying, "You have omnipotence within you. I pray you'll, you'll rest in that and use that as the fuel you burn in living for God faithfully when the trials and the difficulties and the sorrows and the persecutions come your way." And by the way, when the Bible speaks of carrying our cross or when the Bible speaks of perseverance, it does mean all of our trials but primarily it means the trials that come against you because you love Christ. Because as a businessman you can't do things other businessmen do. Because as a wife your priorities for your husband at home are different than the priorities of the other women in the neighborhood. And on and on and on we could go. Those are the trials that he's primarily, I'm convinced, is referring to, not the common trials of sickness, sorrows that all men face, though that's included. I'm not saying that's not a part of what we persevere through.

Anyway, resting in his strength. Three thoughts here. First of all, admit that you naturally will not desire to please God. Just tell him. Don't lie. Be honest. Say, "God, now You know naturally I don't desire to please You." The old Puritans said that the, um, the sins which my flesh loves, I hate. But he was honest. He said, "My old flesh still loves them but the new me hates them." Just be honest. "God, naturally I'm not gonna desire to embrace and walk in Your truth."

Secondly, admit that naturally speaking you do not have the power to do what's right or to live a holy and sanctified life. "Lord, not only naturally do I not desire it, naturally I don't have any ability to do it." It's like Paul would step in here and say, "That's why I said according to His mighty power." How does he actually word it in verse 11? Um, "according to His glorious might." What a, what a, what a phrase, "His glorious might."

Admit naturally that you don't desire it. Admit naturally that you don't have the power to do it. And thirdly, admit that you want to do it and you want to do it right. "Lord, naturally I don't want to but the new me does want to. So Lord, here we go, help me by Your glorious might, by Your strength." Literally, the, the translation should be "the might of His glory." It means that he is not mighty in what he possesses, he's mighty because of who he is and he lives in you. His might is an extension of his very holy character. It's who he is and it's, his might is not something he developed, his might is not something he received, it's just who he is. He's glorious in might and he lives in your heart.

Now one, one of the illustrations I thought about was my, my grandfather was a steam engineer and if you had any kind of machine that ran by steam power, he could run it. He, he ran trains and he worked on all the TVA dams with a steam shovel and, uh, he actually was a quite serious diabetic and he lied on his applications because if they knew he was a diabetic, they'd never give him a job. But he said, "I," you know, they were coming out of the Depression and he said, "Had to feed my family." He wasn't trying to be deceptive, he was just trying to survive. And anyway, he worked and never had an accident, 10, six days a week, 10 hours a day working those steam shovels. But you know, steam power is a crude power. You've gotta keep throwing the coal in there, you've gotta keep heating the, the boilers and those old steam engines had an uneven, uneven clunk of a rhythm to them. It's all we had in those days but it wasn't a very polished, smooth, synchronized type of power. And then we came and discovered petroleum power and gasoline and diesel, now even electric, and the difference is phenomenal, so much so we don't even think about steam powered anything anymore. Power, when he says, "I want you to grasp and walk in the power of His glorious might within you," he's talking about the smooth, synchronized, glorious power of God." You have not only power, you have the, the best kind of power in you to get this done.

So persevere on through. Don't quit. Our Baptist forefathers developed, uh, well, they didn't develop it, they got it from the Bible but they put it in paper, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Later we called it eternal security. Later we called in once saved, always saved. Bad, bad, bad, uh, replacements. We should stay with the

perseverance of the saints because what, what it means is you persevere on living for God and honoring God no matter what if you're really his. Today it means you walk down an aisle, you jump through a hoop and you don't even come to church anymore but you're saved, once saved, always saved. That's not the biblical doctrine and that's not what our forefathers taught. They taught the perseverance of those who are truly in the faith. You might get down but you don't stay down. You might struggle but you keep struggling. You might make a mess but you repent and go again.

By the way, our God is the God of the second chance, and our God is the God of the third chance, and our God is the God of the fourth chance, and our God is the God of the hundredth chance. He's not quitting so why should you quit? He doesn't get tired forgiving, he's rich in mercy so you can't quit. Keep on keeping on for the... "Yeah, but we've got COVID and we've got this, we've got that." It doesn't matter. His glorious might is in you. He's not quitting on you and, by the way, he's not gonna let you quit on him. Now he might let you wander a little bit on a leash so you can just eat some of the filth of this world and take some of it in so you realize just what you don't really want. He sometimes uses our own sin as our discipline. Perseverance. We don't quit. We keep on keeping on.

Well, number 4, this is my last one. Things every Christian should have. Lastly, number 4, they should have a spiritual thanksgiving for God's will. We should have such a, a spiritual thanksgiving. What I mean by that, the Spirit's enabled us to see this, to grasp it, to understand it, and it can't help but result in us being grateful and thankful for this salvation. You know what I think? I mean, I really believe this and I don't, I don't really mean this is a rebuke to you but I do mean it as a reproof. I've said this before. You could have better preachers and better pastors, but I have labored to give you the whole counsel of God and sometimes I think you get numb to it. Sometimes I think you get kind of callous to it. Sometimes I think it's kinda, "Well, we kinda heard that a lot." You've gotta fight that because that starts affecting your gratitude factor, that starts diminishing your thankfulness. It's not as sweet as it used to be. It's not as wonderful as it used to be. It's not as penetrating perhaps. Don't let that happen.

A spiritual thanksgiving for God's will. Notice how he words it there in verse 12, "giving thanks to the Father, who has," what a phrase, "qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light." Now just the thought that God's will was, "I'm gonna give them a salvation through the merits and the work of My Son, and by My Son's work on their behalf alone they now become qualified to be a part of the saints of Light." Now if you really get that, you'll be thankful until the day you die for it. "I'm just thankful that God's will was that His Son would provide my salvation and cause me to be," in other words, he's acting on me, I'm not doing anything, "cause me to be qualified as a saint of Light." The problem with a lot of us is we don't have much of an understanding of our wretched depravity and the unfathomable glory of him taking us from a imp of darkness to now being qualified as a saint of light. Well, that outta make you thankful. Actually, it's the idea of a judicial qualification. By that I mean God has declared it. Now look, it's a past tense verse in the original language. He's not saying, "I'm working to get you qualified." He's not saying, "If you'll keep striving, you'll get qualified." He's saying, "No, no, no."

You are qualified because of God's will to save you through his Son. I'm gonna preach another hour because I don't think you're getting it. Thankful. Thankful. Thankful for that.

Well, not only that, not only that he made me qualified but, secondly, this spiritual thanksgiving wells up in me because he's made me family. He's made me family. He says there in verse 13, "He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." This is a, a, a picture of him reaching down and adopting me out of a far country and bringing me home to his country. I wasn't just kinda outside the, the environ, the environs of his kingdom, I was way out there and he reached down and brought me over and made me family. He didn't make me a bondsman with a, a, a conditional element of becoming family. No, listen to me, God's will was through Christ Jesus you are now family.

That's why anybody that can give a credible conversion testimony is welcome in this church. I don't care, red, yellow, black, white. I don't care, educated, uneducated. I don't care if you're a 'Bama fan, an Auburn fan or a Tennessee fan or whatever in the world, that's a bunch of silly nonsense compared to what we're talking about anyway. If you know Christ, you've got a home here. You are welcome here. All this nonsense about justice and equality, I'll tell you where it is, it's in a true church. In a true church none of that matters. Christ in your heart qualifies you for God and it qualifies you for us. Did I say that strong enough? My goodness, and all this nonsense about, "Well, you don't have enough of this ethnic, ethnicity in your church, you don't have enough of this race in your church or that race." I'm telling you, I wish they would all come, all of them as long as Jesus has saved them, then they're my brother and they're my sister because – listen to me – what unites us is mighty, so mighty the things that the society would say separates us are now, they're not even, they're not even inconsequential, they're obliterated, they're annihilated.

Don't you love Jesus? We're thankful he's made us family in the kingdom of his beloved Son. It literally means "the Son of My love." He says, "Do you understand how much I love this Son of Mine? Do you understand how much I love My Son? I love My Son and now by My doing and by My Son's doing on your behalf, I've now made you My family and like you're My Son." How can you go to bed tonight and say, "O God, thank You. O God, thank You. O God, thank," thank God for his will concerning salvation. Boy, I'm skipping a lot of stuff.

Thirdly, not only thankful that he's made me qualified to be a saint of light, not only thankful that he's made me family, but thankful that he's redeemed or rather forgiven me. Verse 14, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." The word "redemption" comes from the root "ransom," it comes from the slave trade. You've heard this many times. It's the picture of purchasing one and redeeming him by your payment out of his slavery and giving him a new life. That's what Jesus did for us. We have a ransom that he paid for with his blood. Jesus said he gave his life a ransom for many, Mark 10:45. He removed me from the cruel tyranny of Satan's dominion and made me a beloved child of God.

And then the word "forgiveness" here, the very last thing in verse 14, "the forgiveness of sins." The word "forgiveness" here is a word that literally means "to send away." I like what one scholar says, he said the word has the idea of letting sin go as if they'd never been committed. God said, "My will is that My Son Jesus saves you and He sanctifies you, and one day He'll glorify you," and it's all for God's glory, "and, and My Son through His merits has done such a great job in the office of Christ, the office of Savior, He's done such a perfect job I now let your sins go as if they never even existed." You say, "Wait a minute, God's omniscient, He can't forget anything." That's true. He knows every sin you've ever committed but he does not remember them to hold you against them for punishment. He doesn't remember them like that. In that sense, he's let them go as if they were never there. The Old Testament writer said he's thrown our sins as far as the east is from the west. The Old Testament prophet in Micah 7:19 says he's cast our sins into the sea of, or rather in the depths of the sea. God's will is that you have a spiritual thanksgiving for God's will and God's will is that he saves you through Christ and Christ alone.

Well, those are four things every Christian should have.